

commentary

from other pens...

Treaty withdrawal will test new Russia

By George Gedda

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — Last week, NATO's 19 members and Russia orchestrated a major shift in their relations by agreeing to cooperate on issues ranging from civil emergencies to missile defense.

Now, with President Bush's announcement to withdraw from the ABM Treaty, a degree of uncertainty has settled over the future of Russia's relations with NATO — and the United States in particular.

Daryl Kimball, of the private Arms Control Association say Bush's decision could undermine the efforts of Russian President Vladimir Putin to shift Russian foreign policy westward.

Ariel Cohen, a research fellow at the Heritage Foundation, says he does not believe Moscow and Washington will go back to confrontation.

The Russian decision will be, "We're going to live with this," Cohen predicts. He says cuts in the American offensive arsenal, already announced, will make the ABM decision much more palatable for Moscow.

The Russians have known all along that Bush was going to scrap the 1972 treaty and to go ahead with development of a national missile defense. But that hasn't stopped them from reaching out to the West in a way that no one would have predicted a year ago.

Not surprisingly, the new NATO-Russia coziness has triggered debate here, with some analysts warning that the allies have gone too far and others urging that NATO welcome a Russian application for full alliance membership.

As for Putin, he sees the West as the key to Russian modernization. This could mean a phasing out of the ties that Russia has maintained with Iran and Iraq — ties that have long troubled Washington.

One who is skeptical about Russia's supposed new direction is former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger. He recalls that three former Warsaw Pact allies of Russia raced to join NATO two years ago to protect themselves against renewed Russian expansionism.

"Central Europeans consider history more relevant to their concerns than personalities," Kissinger said, a biting reference to the friendly face that Putin has shown to Bush and other Western leaders.

Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld is also wary about the expanded Russian role in NATO decision-making, approved last week in Brussels. He was overruled.

Secretary of State Colin Powell, who attended the Brussels meeting, believes Russia can play a valuable role in helping the alliance combat extremism and terrorism. He also has noted the new role for Russia in NATO will not include veto authority over alliance decisions.

The reservations of Kissinger and Rumsfeld stand in sharp contrast to the views of former Secretary of State James A. Baker III.

Baker writes in an article in Washington Quarterly magazine that Russia should be eligible to apply for admission to NATO "with a firm commitment to membership if and when Russia has substantially satisfied" NATO's criteria for admission.

Baker disagrees with those who see NATO as an insurance policy against "resurgent and possibly virulent Russian nationalism."

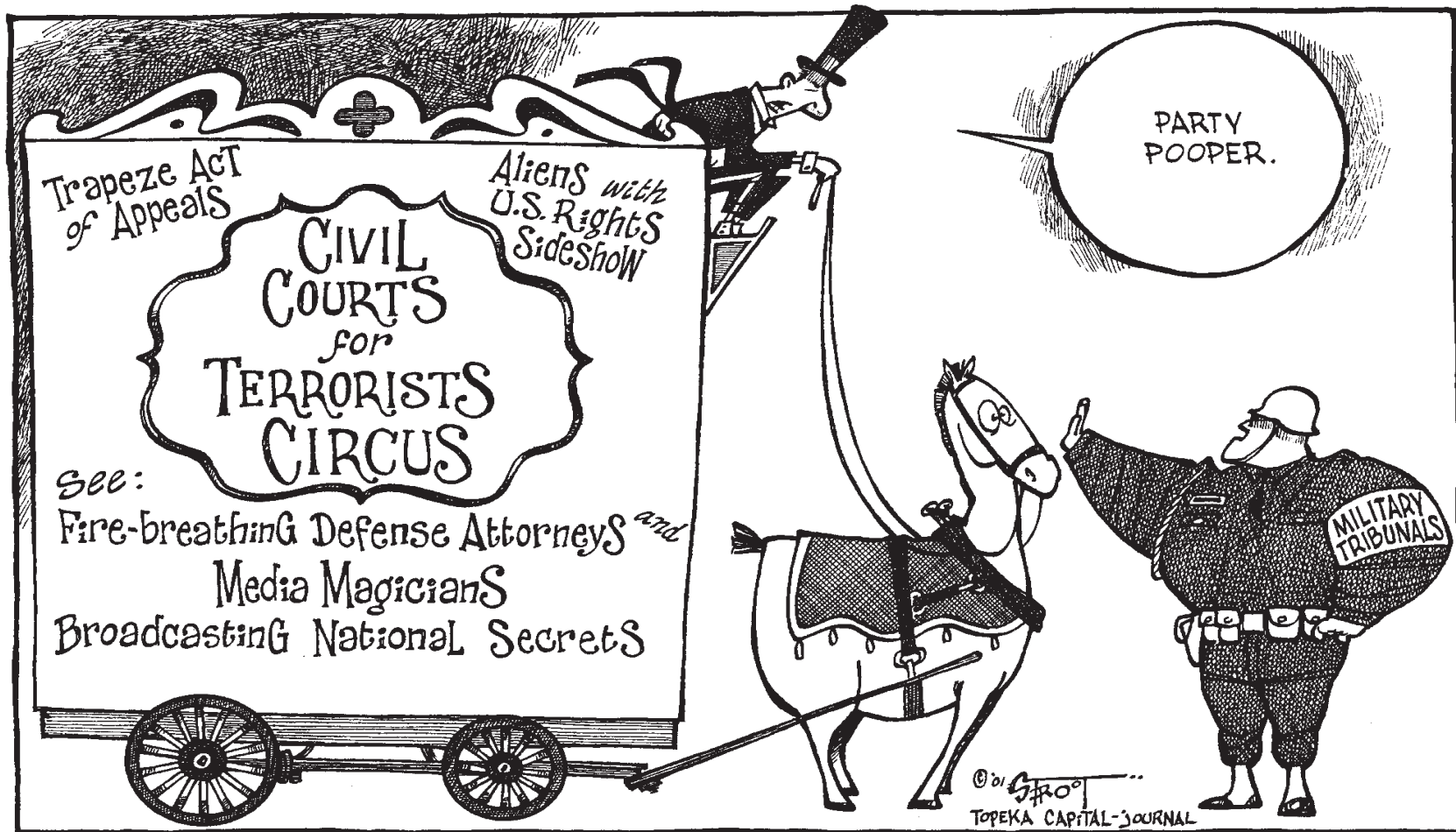
"By continuing to treat Russia as an adversary, we may encourage it to become our enemy. The best way to find an enemy is to look for one, and I worry that is what we are doing when we isolate Russia," he writes.

Not surprisingly, some in the Russian establishment believe that Putin has gone too far and too fast already with his overtures to the West.

"The whole intelligence community is raised on hate for the United States and the West," says Yuri Kobaladze, a former spokesman for the foreign intelligence service. "The quick change on such an issue is difficult to swallow."

With Bush's impending announcement on ABM, Kobaladze and his allies will have more arguments to try to persuade Putin that the West can't be trusted — a view embraced by Soviet leaders for decades.

EDITOR'S NOTE: George Gedda has covered foreign affairs for The Associated Press since 1968.



Wrong turn turns trip into entertaining effort

Taking Mom to Texas took three excruciating days. My sister Marie and I were determined that the trip home would be shorter and quicker.

We were half right.

The day after we arrived, we dropped the car carrier, on which we had had Mom's car for the trip down, at the repair shop. Two jackknives on the icy trip to Texas has put some dents in it and broken one of the tail light wires.

We were free! The roads were dry, our men were in Kansas, we no longer had a cartied to our truck's tail and we were headed for Mexico to shop.

We parked the truck and headed over the international bridge on foot with back packs to drag back the blankets my sister planned to buy. Also on our list were T shirts; antibiotics, which are non-prescription in Mexico; and glassware if we could find any.

We had a great day shopping, although we looked a little like those sturdy young girls from Europe who walk and camp their way across the country.

At the customs stop on the way out, we both got searched.

We just didn't look like all the rest of the 70-something crowd, and besides, when asked what we were bringing back my sister blurted out "drugs" thinking only of the two bottles of amoxicillin she had purchased. The customs lady looked at our backpacks and suggested that we step aside. She was a little surprised to find that a backpackful of drugs turned out to be two bottles of 100 tablets each.

We headed back for Mom's and the next day prepared to drive north.

First we had to pick grapefruit off of the tree our father planted 15 years ago. The grapefruit are wonderful, the best I've ever tasted, but it had rained the night before and each time we pulled a heavy fruit off the little tree, the branch would



cynthia haynes

• open season

spring back up and we would get a shower. Eighty grapefruit and a bath that would have done Saturday night proud found us kissing Mom goodbye and heading north.

Well, not exactly north. Our usual route is up U.S. 281 to San Antonio and then over on I-10 to Junction, Texas, where we pick up U.S. 83, which takes us all the way back to Oberlin. U.S. 83 also runs right past Mom's front door in Texas, but it then follows the curved outline of the state to Laredo. Since this is a longer, slower route, we usually go straight up.

This year there was a lot of construction and we were talking and we soon found ourselves in unfamiliar territory. Since we don't know the area real well, this took a while to figure out. It was where the road split — one half going on one side of a small town, the other half going on the other — that we became suspicious. We had missed the cutoff and were headed for Laredo in the rain.

Since we were already too far west to make any difference, we drove on to Laredo, where we got barbecued chicken, beans, Spanish rice and a slice of white bread at an outdoor fund-raiser for the local hospital.

From Laredo, we headed north just a little disappointed that the streets of Laredo were muddy instead of dusty.

At the immigration stop about 75 miles farther on, we got quizzed on where we were going and where we had been. My sister was more interested in the drug dog, which was busy sniffing our tires,

than the questions. The immigration agent was wondering why we were taking such a long route to get from Donna, Texas, to northern Kansas.

The dog apparently didn't do amoxicillin, and the agent marked us down as crazy but harmless, and we continued to head north through the hill country of Texas.

Marie was fascinated by the tiny deer in Texas and kept slowing down to check trees for parasitic growths. She finally found some and we stopped to gather mistletoe in the rain.

At Leakey, Texas, population 401, we were tired and there seemed to be a craft fair in the park. We stopped to shop and stretch our legs.

The "craft fair" was actually a community Christmas celebration, complete with food, carolers and live sheep. The tiny community fed us, entertained us with stories and songs and waved goodbye as we headed north again.

Now it was dark and the towns were lighted for Christmas, each courthouse in the squares more beautiful than the last.

At Uvalde, Texas, the town Christmas tree is made entirely of cactuses. That must have been interesting to put together.

We spent the night in Childress, Texas, just a couple of hours from the Oklahoma border, and made it back to Oberlin at 2:30 p.m. Sunday afternoon — a day later than we had planned but safe, sound and still silly.

Marie headed home for Concordia and Steve welcomed me with a kiss and a hug. Then he asked me where his trailer hitch was. Well, since we had taken a car carrier to Texas, I know it was there when we left. It was there when we dropped the carrier at the repair shop. I think it was there when we stopped for the night in Childress. But it's gone now.

Sorry, honey, you'll just have to buy a new one. I'll need it in the spring.

'Cause Marie and I are going to do it again.

Parallel double probably ask the girl for a date

Close followers of the physics world now tell us that there is mathematical validity to a theory that an infinite number of parallel universes exist side by side with ours.

I personally can't follow the math, but by my understanding of the theory, every possible action or circumstance which could have happened or will happen, has happened in another universe.

Every decision a person makes, every flap of a bird's wing and every leaf falling off a tree can cause a new universe to branch out.

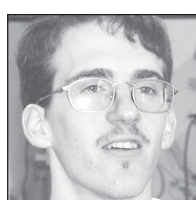
Any possible happening, from a national election, to the outcome of a war, to the route I took to work this morning, can be different from universe to universe.

I like this theory.

Everything I ever didn't do and wished I had, or did do but shouldn't have, all that, somewhere, was done right.

I like the thought of a world out there where back in high school, I found the nerve to ask out Erica Slay. I'm sure she turned me down, but at least I didn't chicken out.

Or a world where that referee didn't choose the



doug stephens

• wisdom from babes

exact wrong moment to turn his head during that important basketball game. I'm telling you, I was fouled. In this sister universe, I got to take my shots. Instead of time running out on the clock and my team losing by one point, I missed both free throws and we lost by one point. But I got my time at the line.

Or maybe a world where instead of getting a speeding ticket two years ago for going 95 in a 60, I got a ticket for failure to yield and not wearing a seatbelt.

Or maybe my wife didn't roll her eyes at my mismatched socks this morning; she laughed at me for putting my sweater on inside out instead.

I'm convinced that in every possible parallel world where a reasonable facsimile of me exists, I'm pretty much the same bumbling, clumsy, shy,

but incredibly good-looking guy. It would be too radical a change otherwise. A Doug with any other stripes just wouldn't be a Doug.

I could be wrong. Maybe in some far distant sometime-somewhere-someplace there is a Doug who's different than the rest of us. This is the guy who managed to get a record deal at the age of 12. He plays point guard for the Phoenix Suns and models underwear for Calvin Klein in his spare time. And Erica Slay asked *him* out.

I don't like this theory.

If I'm lucky, some bright scientist will figure out a way to cross the barrier between the universes, and inter-universal travel will be established. We can have a Doug convention. All of us klutzes and one athlete/rocker/model.

This white sheep of ours would have some heavy explaining to do.

I'm curious. If, hypothetically, a person was to bump off a mirror image of himself, is there a court with jurisdiction? And if this superstar Doppelgänger of mine was to suddenly vanish, would it be considered suicide, or just justifiable homicide?

Kudos to music teacher for wonderful concert

To the Editor:

Music to soothe the savage beast. Wow! My wife and I went to the choir concert Monday night, Dec. 3, and I've got to tell you, those young people get better and better each year. Why not; they have an excellent teacher.

It is hard for my wife and I to sit in those chairs like that because we both have bad backs, but we just can't miss those young people, including our own son, making that "beautiful noise." That's not to mention the exceptional Xpressos doing their thing; they have gotten well deserved state recognition; I believe they can go all the way to the nationals.

I wish I could name names, but there isn't enough room, and I'm not sure it would be polite. However, I spoke to one mother the other day and told her how impressed we were with her son's performance. We have the privilege of knowing several of these young people. I hope I can say



from our readers

• to the editor

someday, for at least one of these young people we know, we knew her when. Shining stars!

Yep, I've said this before, and by golly, I'll say it again and again. I know some people think sports is the only thing in life, but good grief, the music these young people are learning, not to mention the ones who also play an instrument, will be with them for their whole lives. I just wish these young people got the recognition they deserve.

Kudos to Mr. Berls for an excellent job. I ask again, why can't teachers get paid better? Why do people complain so much about taxes, but pay through the nose to go to see ballgames without

complaint?

Hey, somebody has to speak out for our teachers. They deserve better. They'd get better if our elected official did a better job. Just my opinion, but I think more people should speak out. I know I will continue to.

Ronald Asbury
Goodland

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